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EXHIBIT 1  
DATE 1-20-09  
HB 2

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009

TO: Members of the House Human Services Subcommittee

FROM: Tom Altmaier, volunteer Advocate AARP Montana

RE: In Support of LIEAP programs

Madam chair and members of the committee, my name is Tom Altmaier and I'm a volunteer advocate for AARP Montana. AARP Montana is a non-profit non-partisan organization of 165,000 members in this state. Affordable energy is on the minds of many older Montanans and we strongly support the LIEAP program.

Federal energy assistance programs are the primary means for helping low income older people meet their home fuel costs and improve the energy efficiency of their residence. Nationally, about half of all households (49 percent) served by LIEAP have at least one member age 60 or older.

We also know that LIEAP use is increasing here in Montana, according to the Legislative Fiscal Division: "As of early December 2008, division staff reports a 14 increase in approved applications in compared to December 2007." As the economic crisis continues to deepen, more and more Montanans will turn to LIEAP to combat their ever escalating heating costs, as this data shows. That is why we are especially grateful for the increases in eligibility and duration of the program. It will surely be used.

AARP Montana urges you to support LIEAP -it is a strong program and we know that it will continue to be an amazing safety net for all Montanans. Thank you.